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Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that because of the late publication of the relevant documents, the consideration of agenda item 90 would have to be delayed until the morning of Thursday, 19 November, and suggested that in the light of that change, the Committee should begin its consideration of agenda item 78 (b) on the morning of Wednesday, 18 November.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 89: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (A/47/14, and A/47/458)

3. Mr. JENSEN (Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Public Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (A/47/458), which paid particular attention to the need to consolidate training as a means to meet the challenges facing the United Nations and to revitalize the Organization. In response to General Assembly resolution 46/180, the Secretary-General had arranged for UNITAR's activities to be focused on training, had abolished the post of Under-Secretary-General and had appointed the Director of the European Office as Acting Executive Director.

4. UNITAR had for several years been experiencing serious financial difficulties, and now owed the United Nations more than $10 million. The Secretary-General had come to the conclusion that the best course would be for the United Nations to take over the UNITAR building in New York, in return for cancellation of the debt. As a result, the headquarters of UNITAR would be transferred to Geneva. That would permit the establishment of a close relationship between UNITAR and the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, which could accommodate UNITAR's training activities.

5. The phasing out of the UNITAR office in New York would not affect the training activities in multilateral diplomacy at Headquarters, which would continue to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. Arrangements would also be made to continue the other training programmes, in particular those relating to peace-keeping, in coordination with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

6. The Secretary-General had carried out a survey of the various United Nations institutes for training and research, and intended to continue it in the context of the current review of the structures of the Secretariat.

7. Mr. BOISARD (Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) said that the statistics contained in his

(Mr. Boisard)

report (A/47/14) showed that in the past two years nearly 100 different programmes had been launched in some 30 countries in different parts of the world, involving participation by approximately 3,500 people. While the immediate future of UNITAR could also be considered from the point of view of institutional structure or financial imperatives, he proposed to confine himself to programmes. The results were generally satisfactory, for two reasons: firstly, the ever-greater priority being assigned to the development of human resources through training in the process of economic and social development; and secondly, UNITAR's success in creating an original and innovative concept of training. Before programmes were undertaken, they were subjected to an in-depth feasibility study, and a conceptual framework and a pertinent training methodology were proposed. The United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies were then called upon to make contributions. That methodology had been successfully followed for five years in the programmes financed by special-purpose grants, which in the course of 1992 had mobilized 10 times more resources than the UNITAR General Fund. After 1993, which would be a year of transition, UNITAR would have to operate within the strict limits of the funds it could mobilize, and would have to circumscribe future programmes and focus them to a greater extent on urgent training needs.

8. As in the past, those programmes had to concentrate on fields such as training in diplomacy and negotiation, including settlement of disputes in the economic, commercial, political or environmental field; training for economic and social development; training in the management of environmental and natural resources; training of diplomats in the use of data systems; and training in certain aspects of peace-keeping.

9. With regard to financing and management, a very clear distinction would be drawn between two broad categories of programmes. Those charged to the UNITAR General Fund would remain open to the nationals of all States. The corresponding budgets would be presented to the Board of Trustees, and, if necessary, to the relevant administrative and budgetary organs of the United Nations, as appropriate. On the other hand, the training programmes for economic and social development would continue to be implemented at the request of developing countries in response to well-defined needs, and financing would be provided through multilateral, regional or bilateral development cooperation. A separate programme of work would be prepared and submitted for approval to the UNITAR Board of Trustees, together with detailed budgets for each project. All of that would be undertaken with the cooperation of units and institutes of the United Nations system, as appropriate.

10. There was a need to consider three paradoxical aspects of UNITAR's current difficult situation. Firstly, while special-purpose grants continued to increase, the resources of the General Fund were decreasing. Secondly, Member States expected UNITAR to undertake ever more programmes but gave it ever less money. Thirdly, there was a glaring contrast between the number of

(Mr. Boisard)

States whose nationals were participating in the programmes and the number who were making financial contributions.

11. As a result of the progressive decentralization of its activities, UNITAR had begun a long-term action designed to train trainers and set up networks of specialists. The way ahead was arduous, and there was little time left in which to solve the difficulties; but the Institute would take up the challenge, for it was aware of the urgency of training needs.

12. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

13. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan) was concerned that in his report the Secretary-General suggested the complete elimination of the UNITAR New York office, for the activities of the Institute, especially those relating to the training of diplomats in New York and Geneva, had been of great benefit to the developing countries. It would be advisable to retain a small office in New York, which would also provide liaison with Headquarters, so as not to discontinue that training completely.

14. As research was one of the original aims of UNITAR, it must not be overlooked in the current process of restructuring and reform. At the same time, the Institute should be the centre for coordination of training activities in the United Nations system.

15. The main impact of activities carried out by UNITAR was felt at country level; training activities should thus be decentralized not towards Turin, but towards the field level, to the benefit of the developing countries. Centralization in Turin would undermine the independent nature of the work done by UNITAR, and would lead to higher costs for the developing countries, particularly in connection with travel and subsistence allowances.

16. Stringent economic measures were needed to address the situation of UNITAR. His delegation agreed with the decision to downgrade the Executive Director's post to D-2 level and to close down the New York office.

17. The Institute must continue to enjoy some limited subsidy from the United Nations regular budget, as well as voluntary contributions and special purpose grants, as proposed by the high-level consultant.

18. Mrs. HELKE (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, supported many of the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General, including the proposal to hand over the UNITAR building in New York to the United Nations. UNITAR must concentrate its efforts on training activities, and its financial problems must be resolved. The question of the long-term future of the Institute must be addressed, for it could not be left in a continued State of uncertainty and with a constantly growing debt.

(Mrs. Helke, United Kingdom)

19. The Institute must attract the voluntary contributions necessary fully to fund its activities, which must continue to meet the needs of member States. The grants provided by member States to fund UNITAR operations in Geneva fulfilled that function; she thus endorsed the proposal that the Institute should move to Geneva. In future, activities undertaken away from Geneva would have to be fully funded from voluntary contributions.

20. The European Community and its member States also agreed that UNITAR should continue to cooperate closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) International Training Centre at Turin, provided that such cooperation was cost-effective and respected both bodies' respective fields of competence. She welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to make arrangements to ensure that the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy undertaken by UNITAR were not discontinued.

21. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon) said that the previous year the General Assembly had adopted resolution 46/180, on transitional measures concerning the terms of reference of UNITAR. Since then, the post of Executive Director had been downgraded to D-2 level and the Institute's programmes had been decentralized. The programmes should continue, and the decentralization of activities and strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation were to be welcomed. His delegation repeated the proposal to establish cooperation relations between UNITAR and the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon.

22. With regard to the financial situation of UNITAR, the Institute lacked a sound and predictable source of financing; hence its debt of more than $10 million. That situation jeopardized the development of programmes and gave rise to uncertainty regarding the Institute's future.

23. His delegation supported the proposal by the Secretary-General to transfer the building occupied by the UNITAR New York office to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt and coverage of the financial obligations for 1992, provided that that operation was accompanied by other financial provisions to bring about the transition in 1993.

24. It was to be hoped that the Institute's move to Geneva would not have an adverse effect on the training programmes for accredited diplomats in New York and others. He supported the recommendation by the Board of Trustees of UNITAR that the New York office should be transformed into a small operational office responsible for provision of that training.

25. With regard to cooperation between UNITAR and the ILO International Centre at Turin, his delegation hoped that the transfer of some UNITAR activities to the Turin Centre would not lead to the cancellation of programmes for the developing countries.

26. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) reaffirmed the unique role of UNITAR and the relevance of its mandate. The Institute had carried out programmes in the spheres of multilateral diplomacy, international cooperation and economic and social development, and Member States had increasing recourse to its services for the training of their officials. A process of "triangular" cooperation had begun to develop between the developing countries interested in the training of their officials, the industrialized countries that finance the programmes, and UNITAR itself. The concrete outcome had been the seminar on development issues organized by UNITAR and the World Bank Economic Development Institute. But institutional and financial difficulties persisted, difficulties which prevented the Institute from utilizing its full capacity.

27. At the recommendation of the independent high-level consultant, a thorough reform aimed at revitalization had been undertaken. The post of Executive Director had been downgraded, and the Institute's activities now focused on the sphere of training, so as to avoid overlapping with the activities of other institutes.

28. One of the most serious problems for UNITAR was its outstanding debt to the United Nations. His delegation felt that the proposed transfer of the UNITAR office building in New York to the United Nations in exchange for cancellation of the debt would be appropriate. The recommendations in the report, however, went considerably further, and the question was whether, even though the report of the Secretary-General indicated that the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy organized by UNITAR in New York would be continued under the auspices of the United Nations, the mandates of Secretariat bodies allowed them to conduct activities for which they seemed to have neither the experience nor the necessary resources. The choice of the Turin Centre to centralize training activities raised the issue of whether it would be equipped to initiate and organize specialized training programmes. Furthermore, the move to Turin of diplomats and participants from developing countries could create more problems than it solved. In his delegation's view, the required reform presupposed that UNITAR would continue to exist in a different form adapted to the new circumstances.

29. As to the financing of UNITAR, its administrative expenses should be covered by the regular budget of the United Nations, and training activities should be funded through voluntary contributions. The Institute should have adequate premises in New York as well as in Geneva, because it was necessary to maintain a small unit in New York.

30. Mr. OLISEMEKA (Nigeria) observed that UNITAR continued to generate great interest and to enjoy the support of a large number of Member States, which testified to the part it had played in assisting developing countries. It had, for example, cooperated with countries like Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam in the training of their diplomats.

31. General Assembly resolution 46/180 of 19 December 1991 indicated the need to put UNITAR on a firm and predictable financial footing, after having taken

(Mr. Olisemeka, Nigeria)

the requisite interim measures, and acknowledged the sad financial position of UNITAR since the beginning of the 1970s. There had been a deficit in the Institute's General Fund budget for 15 years, and the Institute was still facing serious financial difficulties, with an accumulated debt of over $10 million. However, the financial crisis affected only the General Fund, which had continued to dwindle while special purpose grants had steadily grown.

32. The UNITAR records showed that in the 26 years of its operation, only 55 Governments had made voluntary contributions to the General Fund in any given year, while approximately 8,000 persons had participated in its research seminars and nearly 16,000 had attended its conferences and round tables. It was therefore paradoxical that many Member States were willing to avail themselves of the services of UNITAR but were reluctant to help its work.

33. After having reviewed the reports of the high-level independent consultant (A/46/482, annex), the Board of Trustees of UNITAR (A/46/619) and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/46/624), his delegation fully endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458), especially the proposals that the United Nations should take over the UNITAR building in return for cancellation of the debt and coverage of the financial obligations for 1992, and that there should be a phased transfer to Geneva of the Institute. It also welcomed the proposal to associate the UNITAR in Geneva with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Training Centre in Turin in order to develop an enhanced capacity for inter-agency training programmes. Nevertheless, that question required careful scrutiny, in order to ensure that UNITAR services would not be compromised by its association with the Turin Centre.

34. While welcoming the proposal to move UNITAR headquarters to Geneva, Nigeria agreed that it was necessary to maintain an operational training unit in New York in order to continue certain activities in the city.

35. On the other hand, as regarded the proposal to transfer various New York-based programmes to the competent Secretariat offices, it should be noted that such programmes could be carried out with fewer restrictions under the UNITAR Statute than they could be if they were implemented by the Secretariat.

36. With respect to the financial provisions for a restructured UNITAR, his delegation favoured funding the UNITAR administrative budget and training programme in future from voluntary contributions, special purpose grants and executing-agency overheads, while the cost of training programmes conducted at the specific request of United Nations bodies and agencies should be covered by the requesting organization.

37. In conclusion, he praised the work of UNITAR and reaffirmed Nigeria's full support for it.

38. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

39. Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) said that the report of the Secretary-General on UNITAR (A/47/458) highlighted various issues related to the necessary reform of the Institute, like the need to rationalize its activities and make more effective and careful use of the scarce financial resources at its disposal. Those questions had become crucial in view of the critical condition of the UNITAR General Fund and the system of voluntary contributions.

40. The role UNITAR played in the area of training made it necessary to find an overall solution to the current situation. The experience of the past year showed that hope should not be placed in generous voluntary contributions, but rather that new sources of funding had to be found. The Russian Federation consequently supported the proposal to transfer the UNITAR headquarters to Geneva and hand over its building to the Secretariat. Another possibility that should be studied would be to lease the building for an extended period so that the UNITAR debt could be absorbed gradually in the regular budget of the United Nations.

41. As to funding the ongoing activities of the Institute, the Russian Federation had on other occasions expressed its opposition to replenishing the UNITAR General Fund from the regular budget of the United Nations. Such steps to "save" UNITAR were not compatible with the Institute's status as an autonomous body, which must be funded exclusively through voluntary contributions.

42. The problems the Institute was experiencing and its shortcomings should not cause the achievements of the last few years to be forgotten. The new administrators of UNITAR had promoted innovative measures that took into account the current situation and practical needs of Member States; an example was the subprogramme that UNITAR would introduce in 1993, on the diplomacy of multilateral conferences for representatives of various countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

43. In conclusion, he emphasized that it was not possible to continue deferring practical action on restructuring UNITAR, but that specific solutions had to be found immediately.

44. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland) said that he shared the views of previous speakers, especially the idea that UNITAR should focus on training programmes and training-related research; that the management of UNITAR must be improved while ensuring the efficiency of its operations; and that its activities must be financed through voluntary contributions. The transfer of UNITAR to Geneva would be a good way of achieving those objectives.

45. Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines), recalling that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) had been founded to give professional training to diplomats and international civil servants, said that diplomats could not depend for their knowledge exclusively on such classical writers as Grotius and Hobbes but needed to be familiar with many modern disciplines such

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

as the processes of economic growth, social development and peace-keeping. Legions of diplomats, particularly from the developing world, had been trained by UNITAR. However, the problems that had plagued the Institute in recent years had led many to believe it had outlived its usefulness and become a superfluous organization in the United Nations system.

46. Almost since its foundation, UNITAR had faced the difficulty of being funded from voluntary contributions alone. Government contributions had declined, so that, despite drastic budget cuts, the Institute's debt had increased; in 1991, the deficit had exceeded $700,000, while in 1992 it was close to $500,000.

47. At the forty-sixth session, his delegation had supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General's independent consultant on UNITAR, including the suggestions that UNITAR research activities should be limited to those areas where it enjoyed comparative advantage, and that a specific allocation from the regular budget should be granted to a restructured UNITAR. Having stressed the need for reform at that session, his delegation now welcomed the interim measures that had been taken towards such reform.

48. In August 1992, the UNITAR Board of Trustees had accepted the options suggested by the Secretary-General, including the purchase of the Institute's headquarters, in order to cancel its debt, and the transfer of its headquarters to Geneva. The Philippine member of the Board of Trustees had joined its consensus decisions, although he had indicated some reservations concerning the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva, which reservations his delegation now reiterated. If UNITAR remained in New York, it could maintain a core staff with more limited but more specialized functions, whereas if it was transferred to Geneva, it would in practice be dependent on the International Training Centre at Turin and would therefore become superfluous.

49. Mr. LICHEM (Austria) said it was regrettable that, at a time when there seemed to be a greater need than ever for UNITAR, it should be in a profound and almost irreparable crisis.

50. UNITAR had not been created to dispense just any type of training. Rather, it had been dedicated to improving the professional capacity of international civil servants and diplomats. There was a need to improve the management capabilities of the United Nations and to find ways to improve intersectoral analysis, assessment and policy-making on issues related to sustainable development.

51. There would be no improvement in the performance of the United Nations Secretariat unless modern management concepts were assimilated by Secretariat staff at all levels of responsibility. There was a need, also, to research which management approach would be most suitable for the United Nations. How could those needs be met when there was talk of scaling down, eliminating or moving UNITAR? It might be useful to distinguish between its different

(Mr. Lichem, Austria)

training functions, assess their interrelatedness and only then determine the institutional framework that would provide the best and most cost-efficient response to those needs.

52. First, training programmes for developing countries related to specific technical issues of development were required. Such programmes should be financed from the various technical assistance funds, including UNDP.

53. Secondly, training for junior and middle-level staff and diplomats should be provided, particularly for the lower levels, at the headquarters of the international organizations concerned, if possible on the basis of voluntary financing.

54. Thirdly, training programmes for senior-level staff on intersectoral global issues, on management and on long-term institutional development of the United Nations system should be offered by a central United Nations entity.

55. The research capabilities of UNITAR had never been fully utilized. There was a proven need for conducting research within the United Nations. There was in addition a broader issue of research relating to the increasingly important role of science in multilateral decision-making.

56. Only a few institutions possessed the capability to provide international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary analyses of global issues. Cooperation with those institutions should be strengthened and put on a permanent footing.

57. There was a pressing need to obtain now the institutional quality required to respond to the issues of today and even more so of tomorrow.

58. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that, ever since its founding, UNITAR had done a great deal of work in vocational training and research. That contribution had helped officials to improve their effective participation in multilateral activities. Therefore, she agreed with the Secretary-General's idea, put forward in his report, that training activities in the United Nations system should be strengthened.

59. The Institute's debt had long remained an outstanding problem. Accordingly, her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that the UNITAR building in New York should be handed over to the United Nations, its New York office phased out and its headquarters transferred to Geneva.

60. With regard to the proposed establishment of an association between the Geneva-based Institute and the International Labour Organisation International Training Centre in Italy, consideration of that question was premature and should await the commencement of the Institute's work at Geneva.

(Ms. Yang Yanyi, China)

61. The annual training programmes in multilateral diplomacy undertaken by UNITAR in New York were meaningful and had benefited many Member States, especially those from the developing world. It was to be hoped that that function would not be adversely affected by the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva.

62. Her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNITAR training activities should continue to be financed through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants. China had always attached great importance and lent support to the Institute's work. It had also taken an active part in many UNITAR training programmes. The Chinese Government had decided to pledge to the Institute a contribution of $10,000 for the year 1993.

63. Ms. ADAMSON (Australia) said that her delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's view that in the context of a revitalized United Nations, it would be essential to enhance training opportunities. It also endorsed the Secretary-General's remarks on training in his statement on the international civil service to the Fifth Committee on 6 November 1992.

64. She drew the Committee's attention to the work being undertaken at the current session in the General Assembly and several of the main Committees on preventive diplomacy in the context of the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). In his statement during the general debate, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade had called for a strengthened capacity within the United Nations to encourage and assist parties to disputes to resolve their differences peacefully. As evidence of Australia's conviction of the value of training in preventive diplomacy, he had announced a contribution of US$ 50,000 to a new fellowship programme in preventive diplomacy which UNITAR was planning to launch in 1993. She urged other Member States which were committed to the principles of preventive diplomacy to join Australia in supporting that programme.

65. Her delegation also attached importance to the provision by UNITAR of training programmes which helped the representatives of Member States to participate effectively in the multilateral process. Australia was pleased that UNITAR had begun providing training in the use of information technology and access to United Nations data banks and hoped that such activities would continue.

66. Her delegation was also pleased that the Secretary-General had made a set of specific recommendations aimed at resolving the financial difficulties of UNITAR. Although her delegation supported in principle the general thrust of those recommendations, it reserved the right to comment further when the recommendations in respect of the Institute's debt were addressed by the appropriate bodies.

67. Mr. HURLEY (United States of America) praised the Secretary-General on his action to abolish the post of Under-Secretary-General of UNITAR in February 1992. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's call

(Mr. Hurley, United States)

for the training activities of UNITAR to be funded through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants as called for in the Institute's statutes.

68. Concerning the recommendation to transfer UNITAR to Geneva, his delegation believed that a thorough assessment should be undertaken of all potential costs involved in such a transfer. Such costs should first take into consideration the Secretary-General's recommendation that serious staff reduction and redeployment be undertaken.

69. Regarding the Institute's debt, his delegation was opposed to the allocation of any regular budget funds to fund UNITAR; such objection included 1992 obligations of the Institute, the cancellation of its debt and any transitional period costs.

70. Finally, although the United States recognized that UNITAR was going through a critical period, it would be a mistake to continue to prop up an institute with United Nations funds.

71. Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) asked whether the UNITAR Board of Trustees had endorsed the Secretary-General's report. He also sought clarification on the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva and thence to Turin and asked which activities would be transferred to Turin. In his opinion, a more thorough consideration should be given to the issue of transferring UNITAR to Geneva.

72. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt), referring to the reports contained in documents A/47/458 and A/47/14, said that steps must be taken immediately to resolve the financial difficulties facing UNITAR; in his opinion, the Institute's debt of $10 million stemmed from the reluctance of Member States to pay their contributions as long as the uncertainty with respect to the Institute's future status remained. His delegation appreciated the Institute's training activities in multilateral diplomacy, especially those carried out in New York, and the training provided in economic and social development and the special programmes and advisory services. He stressed, in particular, the crucial role played by UNITAR in the organization of seminars together with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank in Washington.

73. Egypt considered it important to maintain a UNITAR office in New York in order to continue with those activities. For its part, Egypt was prepared to consider the proposal contained in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458); it was an appropriate manner of resolving the Institute's debt problem and ensuring the discharge of its obligations. The Funding mechanisms of UNITAR and of the United Nations system as a whole must be diversified in order to achieve stability; they should include financial contributions, subsidies from the regular budget and grants.

74. Mrs. SCOTT (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), underscored the importance that those countries attached to the development of human resources, through education and training, as a means of achieving real economic progress; they recognized the work the Institute had done over the years through its wide range of multidisciplinary training programmes, and noted the increased reliance on inter-agency cooperation and on decentralization, which had resulted in courses being held at the country and subregional levels.

75. She wondered how the needs of Member States and their permanent missions as well as those of the Secretariat would be met if the New York office was phased out. Although mention had been made of the intention to continue providing the training programmes in multilateral diplomacy under the auspices of the United Nations no definite information had been provided in that respect and the CARICOM countries doubted whether the same quality and quantity of programmes which the Institute provided as an autonomous body could be maintained.

76. In regard to the proposal to establish close relations with the International Labour Organisation's International Training Centre with a view to carrying out the bulk of UNITAR training activities at that Centre, the CARICOM delegations wondered how such an association would fill the gaps that the proposed transfer would leave; they wondered, in particular, how their permanent missions could avail themselves of the programmes which were supposed to be designed for them, whether the appropriate resources had been identified to facilitate such access or whether other scenarios had been envisaged.

77. The CARICOM delegations questioned the assumption that voluntary contributions would be forthcoming for UNITAR if it were transferred elsewhere. The problems of the Institute stemmed from financial uncertainty and adjustments in its mandate and location did not appear to be an appropriate solution.

78. Mr. KOLKE (Japan) said that his country had long appreciated the Institute's work which had benefited developing countries in particular; in recognition of that contribution, his country had consistently supported the Institute's activities by contributing US$ 100,000 every year to UNITAR. Urgent action must be taken to eliminate the huge debt which UNITAR owed the United Nations.

79. With regard to its research programmes, his delegation was of the view that the current review should be continued and that the possibility of totally discontinuing the Institute's activities should not be excluded in the light of the extensive research activities carried out by other United Nations bodies and possible duplication.

80. With regard to the Secretary-General's report (A/47/458), his delegation supported the recommendation that UNITAR training activities should be funded

(Mr. Kolke, Japan)

through voluntary contributions and special-purpose grants. It also supported the proposal to transfer UNITAR to Geneva and to discontinue all training activities in New York except those relating to multilateral diplomacy. While agreeing that the Institute's training programmes should be continued in Geneva in cooperation with the ILO International Training Centre, it believed that the role of the Geneva office and the relationship between the two institutions should be clarified, and it therefore requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its next session on the arrangements that would be necessary to ensure cooperation and on the impact that such new cooperation might have on the resources and facilities of the Turin Centre.

81. With respect to training programmes in multilateral diplomacy, his delegation agreed that they should be continued under the auspices of the United Nations and should, in principle, be funded through voluntary contributions. It welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to undertake a comprehensive review in the context of the ongoing restructuring of the Secretariat. In that connection, the possibility of transferring the research activities of UNITAR to the United Nations University should be seriously considered.

82. Japan endorsed the Secretary-General's conclusion that the United Nations should take over the UNITAR building in New York in return for the cancellation of its debt of over $10 million.

83. Mr. NYAMIKEH (Ghana) recalled that, in its resolution 46/180, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the problem of the Institute's debt, dealing with such issues as terms of reference, programmes, funding, rationalization, location, possibilities and solutions. The Committee had that report before it in document A/47/458.

84. Although the Secretary-General had downgraded the post of the head of the Institute to Executive Director and had concluded that the best way to resolve the debt problem was for the United Nations to take over the UNITAR building in New York in exchange for cancellation of its debt and coverage of its 1992 financial obligations, in the opinion of his delegation, he had ignored many of the requests contained in the resolution, such as those relating to collaboration with the Board of Trustees, consultations with Governments in the preparation of the report and the feasibility of utilizing the Institute for peace-keeping operations.

85. Instead of an analysis, the Secretary-General had presented various conclusions regarding the solution to the debt problem, such as transferring the New York office to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the debt, relocating UNITAR to Geneva and establishing close relations with the International Training Centre at Turin.

(Mr. Nyamikeh, Ghana)

86. Before deciding to transfer a scaled-down UNITAR to Geneva, the General Assembly should consider what arrangements could be made to continue its programmes, which were of great benefit to the developing countries. Year after year, the mandate of the Institute was reaffirmed, but it was not provided with adequate financial resources, despite the fact that the programmes and activities of UNITAR received praise from all the countries. His delegation appealed to the countries that had stopped contributing to UNITAR to begin doing so again.

87. Two reports had been issued in response to General Assembly resolution 46/180. The first report, of which advance copies had been distributed, had been faithful to the spirit and letter of the resolution. That report had mysteriously disappeared, only to be replaced by the one contained in document A/47/458, which was totally unacceptable to his delegation since it did not respond to the terms of reference defined in the resolution.

88. The report did not indicate how the other units of the Secretariat could perform the Institute's functions. Reforming UNITAR should make it possible for the basic costs of certain staff and other administrative expenses to be absorbed under the regular budget of the United Nations. The transfer of some UNITAR training activities to the ILO Centre at Turin also had budgetary implications.

89. His delegation proposed that the Secretary-General should be authorized to complete the task assigned to him in General Assembly resolution 46/180 and should report on his analysis and recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In the meantime, the United Nations should continue to cover the administrative costs of the Institute under the regular budget.

90. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that his delegation had reviewed the options presented in the Secretary-General's report on UNITAR (A/47/458) and was open to any proposals that might result from the current discussions. However, in view of the rapidly changing international landscape, the Institute's training function was indispensable and should be enhanced, not curtailed. Thus, while his delegation did not oppose rationalization, it considered it imperative for UNITAR to maintain a presence in New York, especially in the field of training and training-oriented research. In the current era of fundamental change, the United Nations needed institutions like UNITAR that made it possible to increase the effectiveness and negotiating capabilities of Member States. In that context, his delegation welcomed the decision to expand UNITAR training activities to encompass the field of peace-keeping and peacemaking.

91. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that, although many developing countries, including Colombia, had benefited from UNITAR, the question was not whether those benefits should continue to be provided, but what it cost to provide them and what administrative structure would do so best. It was necessary to distinguish between the functions to be performed by the Secretariat and the

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

structure of the Secretariat, and to question whether its current structure was the most appropriate one. His delegation supported the proposals in the Secretary-General's report for restructuring UNITAR within a general context of administrative efficiency and financial feasibility.

92. Discussions of the functions to be performed by the organs of the United Nations tended to end with the conclusion that there was no money for those functions; when that happened the question to be asked was: what were the opportunity costs? The best way for an institution such as UNITAR to fulfil its duty to the developing countries was for it to carry out its training work in the field, in other words, to provide on-the-job training in the countries themselves.

93. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to associate UNITAR with the ILO International Training Centre at Turin and to fund those activities from voluntary contributions, although it regretted that the Institute's debt should have to be absorbed under the regular budget of the Organization.

94. The CHAIRMAN said that, at the next meeting of the Committee, the Executive Director of UNITAR and the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, would respond to the delegation's various comments regarding the agenda item under consideration.

The meeting rose at 6.06 p.m.